

# SENATOR **Nell Soto** 32nd Senatorial District

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 10, 2002

Contact: Marty Uribes, Press Secretary  
(916) 445-6868

## **SENATOR SOTO'S PACKAGE OF BILLS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS MOVES FORWARD**

**Sacramento** – Three Senate bills designed to protect senior citizens, authored by Senator Nell Soto (D-Pomona), passed through the Senate Health and Human Services Committee today. The bills are SB 1727, prescription drug costs; SB 1633, Medi-Cal transfer notices; and SB 1598 Medi-Cal recovery.

“These are bills that are needed to keep our elderly from financial problems,” says Senator Soto. “So many times these people are not given all the information they need to make sound decisions. These bills will require that pertinent information be released when it comes to buying prescription drugs and applying for Medi-Cal.”

SB 1598 focuses on Medi-Cal Claims and Recovery. The Medi-Cal Recovery Program, established in 1993, allows the state to recover benefits after a person dies by seizing their property upon their death. In many cases, this has left the surviving spouse with estate claims, and surviving caregivers with liens on their property that accrues extraordinary interest.

SB 1598 would prohibit recovery from a surviving spouse or from minor, blind or disabled children; it would require the department to adopt regulations specifying hardship criteria that includes age, income and other compelling circumstances. It also establishes clear statute of limitations for recovery actions.

-more-

**Capitol Office:** State Capitol, Room 4066 • Sacramento, CA 95814-4906 • (916) 445-6868 • Fax (916) 445-0128  
**District Offices:** 822 N. Euclid Avenue, Suite A • Ontario, CA 91762 • (909) 984-7741 • Fax (909) 984-6695  
215 N. “D” Street, Suite 106 • San Bernardino, CA 92410 • (909) 381-3832 • Fax (909) 381-0739  
505 S. Garey Avenue, Second Floor • Pomona, CA 91766 • (909) 469-9935 • Fax (909) 469-9206  
**Homepage:** [www.sen.ca.gov/soto](http://www.sen.ca.gov/soto) • **E-Mail:** [senator.soto@sen.ca.gov](mailto:senator.soto@sen.ca.gov)

SB 1633 protects elderly or disabled adults and their property when applying for Medi-Cal. Approximately 1.6 million non-institutionalized aged and disabled adults receive Medi-Cal benefits in California. Many of these individuals are unaware or misinformed regarding their rights to transfer their interests in the home without affecting their Medi-Cal benefits.

SB 1633 would require that all elderly, blind or disabled Medi-Cal applicants receive a simple statement, in writing, of the circumstances under which an interest in a home may be transferred without affecting Medi-Cal eligibility.

SB 1727 contains two programs. It would require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a technical advisory committee that would provide information on the efficiency, safety and comparative costs of a wide range of prescription drugs.

The bill would also expand the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP). HICAP currently provides consumer information to seniors regarding free and discount prescription drug programs. This bill will provide a toll free number and a website, as well as personal counseling for seniors to access.

All of these bills will now go to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

###